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ABSTRACT

Recent relevant actions by the Coalition of English Associations, selected regional accreditation associations, and five state legislatures, are described in this paper, the purpose of which is to review progress already made--and consider potential for further progress--toward a closer community of scholar-teachers. The paper examines development in three areas: (1) the establishment of a balance between the relative importance of composition and literature and of teaching and research; (2) the assurance of resources to achieve teaching and research goals by providing suitable work loads and class sizes; and (3) the facilitation of good instruction by resolving difficulties associated with part-time and temporary positions. Fifteen references are appended. (MS)

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Status of the Profession:Progress Toward a Closer Community of Scholar-Teachers:

"Recent Relevant Actions by the Coalition, Selected Regional Accreditation Associations, and Several Legislatures"

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Many members of our profession seek a closer community among scholar-teachers to afford our students the benefits of excellent teaching grounded in scholarship and research. In seeking such a relationship, we panelists seem to have followed the advice that the maid Dorine in Molière's Tartuffe gave to the young lovers who are separated by an old man: "We'll use all manner of means, and all at once."

Professor James Slevin presented progress through the Modern Language Association, and Professor Linda Robertson described progress through another of our professional organizations, the Conference on College Composition and Communication. My charge on this panel is to review the progress we have realized through three broader groups and the potential for further progress--if we become aware of the contexts we work in and become, instead of reactive, proactive.

This review cannot be exhaustive without being exhausting. Thus, I have limited describing progress by the Coalition of English Associations to a few actions; by the regional associations for accreditation to the actions of the four responding to my written requests (and offers of money); and by the agreements between faculty associations and state boards of higher education to actions in five states: Minnesota, California State, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Hawaii (see the list of resources appended).

I have also limited describing progress by these groups to three areas: (1) establishing the relative importance of composition and literature and of teaching and research; (2) assuring resources to achieve these goals by providing suitable work loads and class sizes; and (3) facilitating good instruction by resolving difficulties associated with part-time and temporary positions.

The first of the three groups, the Coalition, has made still incompletely reported progress in more than one area. In the first flush of awareness that the Coalition of [Seven] English Associations had been formed, members of the CCCC's at the 1986 business meeting passed almost unanimously a resolution to request the Coalition to "study the feasibility of its forming an accreditation or certification association for programs in English at the postsecondary level [author's underscoring]." Just recently the members of the Coalition's Steering Committee stated that they did not believe it feasible for the Coalition to form an accreditation association as the Coalition is not a legal entity and is not likely to become one.

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(Interestingly, the Executive Committee of the CCCC's has created and funded an ad hoc committee to "investigate accrediting writing programs and to report to the Executive Committee about the feasibility [or lack of it] in CCCC's assuming leadership in providing an accreditation service for members and their institutions [author's underscoring]." Also interestingly, the National Council of Teachers of English has developed new Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts which will be used by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE] in accrediting those colleges of education which prepare teachers of English.)

The Coalition itself made accomplishments last summer. For example, "at the college level, the conferees proposed an undergraduate major involving study of 'a variety of works, including scientific papers and literary theory' plus 'analyzing the historic, cultural, and political dimensions of what they read. Writing should be an integral part of the curriculum.' " ("Coalition ..." 782). The official report 1987 English Coalition Conference: A Report to the Profession, edited by Professors Richard Lloyd-Jones and Andria Lunsford will include ten general learning principles; edited reports of the elementary, secondary, and college strands' recommendations; and anecdotes. Profs. Booth and Elbow will also write books.

Before detailing specific progress in each of the three areas, I wish to note some strengths of the regional associations for accreditation of colleges. (1) Universities value them and boldly announce membership in them. (2) The public tends to associate a profession's high ethical standards with professional guidelines and accreditation. (3) Regional associations work sensibly through self-study and visitation; recommendations for improvement; a gradual process for review of complaints; and, as a last resort, public disclosure of denial of accreditation to an institution seriously ineffective. Besides, these associations will provide names of consultants to institutions asking for advice. (4) The regional associations for accreditation are evaluated, in turn, by the Council on Postsecondary Education [COPA], a non-governmental body to assist accreditation associations for not only colleges but also special fields, such as, engineering and chemistry.

(5) "For purposes of determining eligibility of Universities seeking governmental assistance under certain legislation, the U.S. Secretary of Education is required to publish a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies and associations which he/she determines to be reliable authorities as to the quality of training offered by educational institutions and programs. Most institutions thus attain eligibility for Federal funds by holding accredited or candidate status with one of the accrediting bodies recognized by the Secretary of Education in addition to fulfilling other eligibility requirements" (NSAC 4).

What happens to a department, such as English, which lacks a specialized accreditation association? There is a savings clause which alert members of departments of English can use: "It becomes the responsibility of the [regional associations for accreditation of colleges] to evaluate the work of specialized schools, divisions, and departments when they are not accredited by the appropriate professional agencies [author's underscoring]" (SACS 2).

It is fair--perhaps even an understatement--to say that accreditation associations have good strength--if we use them knowledgeably.

We now look at the first area--the progress made by regional accreditation associations and by agreements between faculty associations and state boards of higher education in establishing the balance between composition and literature and between teaching and research.

Not one of the associations or the agreements specifies an appropriate relationship between composition and literature. Possibly members of these groups may be unaware of imbalances, consider imbalances matters for departments of English to resolve internally, or focus on more wholistic issues.

In regard to the relative roles of teaching and of scholarship-research, accreditation associations assert the primacy of teaching. "The instruction of students should be the central focus of the resources and services of the institution" (NEASC 35). "The principal focus of the total institution should be on education of students. Instruction is the basic means to that end" (NASC 47).

"If one of the purposes of an institution is the accomplishment of significant research..., [that institution] will be expected to show that ample time within its total faculty workload is provided for research" (SACS 23). "Discharging responsibility to granting agencies must not reduce teaching effectiveness on the part of the teacher-investigator" (SACS 45). "In using funds from contracts, grants, and contributions in support of research, the institution should not become dependent upon that portion allowed for indirect or overhead costs in support of its regular operating budget" (SACS 44). "Care should be exercised that support from outside agencies in some areas within the...university does not adversely affect morale in other areas through development of jealousies. If teaching loads are reduced so that obligations to outside agencies may be satisfied, resentment on the part of persons in other areas, or even in the same area, can be a significant basis for low morale. The administrative officers...should provide research support and time for those who are not in a position to seek grants" (SACS 45-46).

Between 1984 and 1988, one accreditation association, the Northwest Association, made changes in its standards for research that are significant for English (NASC). The standards of 1988 define "scholarship" along with "research" ("Revisions..." 1). They stress the role of the faculty, rather than of the "administration and faculty" (Accreditation 80), in developing and monitoring institutional research policies and practices ("Revisions..." 1). Whereas the new version requests evidence "that faculty scholarship and research have enhanced the educational effectiveness of academic programs" ("Revision..." 2), the older version requested evidence to

show whether research has "reduced" or improved teaching effectiveness of the teacher-investigator (Accreditation 82). Omitted from the new version is the statement that "Participation of faculty members in grant or contract research activities is to be on a voluntary basis" (Accreditation 81). This change seems to permit the use of contracts which require grant-funded research for tenure and promotion of faculty members.

The primacy of teaching over research recommended by the regional accreditation associations is increasingly and seriously threatened.

We now turn to any progress in assuring the resources to achieve goals of teaching and research by providing suitable workloads and class sizes. The accreditation associations have helpful, though broad, standards. Effective instruction is related to the number of class contact hours, the class sizes, the number of preparations, the characteristics of the students, and the nature of the course (SACS 12, 23). Evaluation of faculty members should be determined partly on the basis of workload. "Each institution must show that a realistic amount of time is available in the sum total of faculty workloads to care for assigned duties associated with institutional operation, such as committee assignments, administrative responsibility for institutional functions, duties of public and alumni relations, and assigned supervision of student activities" (SACS 23). Although these standards are broad, it is helpful to observe that visitation teams are asked to provide evidence to show that teaching loads are "equitably and reasonably determined" (NEASC 45; NASC 56).

The agreements between faculty associations and state boards concerning workloads are somewhat more specific. According to one agreement, the faculty member shall have prior and reasonable consultation regarding his/her schedule; and if a dean wishes to revise a schedule, opportunities for discussion will be given, and reasons supplied (Massachusetts 41). Another agreement provides still more specific criteria. The normal load is 15 weighted units per term, that is, 12 weighted units for instruction and 3 for instruction-related responsibilities, with consideration of further reduction for graduate instruction, sports, research, independent study, teacher supervision, field work, service on a university committee, activities classes, and laboratories (California State 44). At one point, one credit-hour of lecture counted 1 weighted unit, of an activity course 1.3 weighted units, and of a laboratory 2.0 weighted units. (Perhaps our composition courses which are taught as activities classes or as laboratories and are augmented by substantial work outside of class merit a weight above 1.0).

Concerning class size, agreements between faculty and state boards may specify a student-faculty ratio, such as 18.25 to 1. Occasionally the faculty association and a state board may agree to "maintain the goal of achieving a student-faculty ratio appropriate to a high quality of education" (Massachusetts 34).

Thus in this area where English is more demanding than most other disciplines, that is, in workload and class size, inadequate help comes from associations and agreements. This is probably so because these authorities set general standards appropriate for many disciplines. However, the idea of weighted units offers informed and proactive faculty members of English departments potential action for achieving progress.

We arrive at our last area. Here, progress toward facilitating good instruction by resolving difficulties associated with part-time and temporary positions occurs clearly in the standards of regional accreditation associations and in faculty-state board agreements. After a moment's thought, one realizes that the reason for this specificity of standards is that part-time and temporary positions are found in many departments, not just in English, and at all levels, undergraduate and graduate.

Accreditation associations may specify what degrees are required of part-time faculty, perhaps a master's degree or a documented equivalent (SACS 21). They may specify the proportion of degrees required, such as, 50% one year beyond the master's, 30% earned doctorates, and approximately 25% earned doctorates in the discipline (SACS 21). Further, "criteria for the appointment of part-time or adjunct faculty and their supervision should be comparable to those for full-time faculty, as should provisions for review of teaching effectiveness and opportunities for professional development and participation" (MSA, "Characteristics..." 16). In general, the accreditation associations instruct visitation teams to study the adequacy of provisions made for "the faculty (full-time and part-time) to participate in the formulation of institutional policies and practices" (NEASC 43). They demand that the written "personnel policies for full-time and part-time faculty cover...academic freedom; recruitment, selection, appointment, promotion, and retention of faculty; leaves of absence; pensions and retirement; and faculty responsibilities in regard to teaching loads, work for extra compensation, outside employment, and research and/or publication" (NEASC 43). Frequently, "a core of full-time instructional faculty with major professional commitment to the institution...is deemed essential" (NACS 56).

Agreements between faculty associations and state boards are even more specific. In some states, part-time faculty receive benefits, such as, prorated paid-sick-leave accruals (California State 59; Michigan 45; Minnesota 21); health care (Michigan 73), dental care (California State 84), and vision care (California State 85). If over half-time of full-time salary, they may be granted educational leave funds of \$175 (Massachusetts 107). They may receive prorated travel funds (Minnesota 19). While they sometimes must be evaluated through reviews by peer groups, administrators, and students, they sometimes may request evaluation and placement of that evaluation in their files (California State 34). Some part-time faculty receive prorated salaries (Minnesota 11, 29-30), sometimes with eligibility for prorated "merit awards" (Massachusetts 101-102). In some states, prioritized lists (Massachusetts 69) or seniority rosters (Minnesota 48) are maintained--even with a partial right of grievance procedure if a part-time teacher is by-passed for hiring (California 24). Vacancies are widely announced (Minnesota 25), and part-time faculty have prior opportunities to become full-time (Minnesota 30). One state limited the ratio of visiting full-time faculty to full-time faculty as 1 to 25 (Massachusetts 38), and another state limited non-tenure-track appointments to no more than 8% (Minnesota 30).

When the part-time faculty members are receiving prorated benefits of full-time faculty, it is not clear whether they carry out proportionately the responsibilities of the full-time faculty.

Something of a discovery, for me at least, was a new kind of part-time faculty member, the formerly full-time faculty member on "reduced contract" (Minnesota 9) or on "pre-retirement reduced time" (California 73). In Michigan, there are two types of "flexible appointments": one type merely omits summer session; the other reduces teaching during the regular year to 95-89% of full time, that is, 30-35 hours, by advance arrangement and with health and retirement benefits (49-53).

In any case, I sense from the documents available that members of the accreditation associations and the state boards are keen about rewarding those who teach.

Looking at the list of actualities and possibilities of progress, I am reminded of the comment Winston Churchill made when an arrogant lady chided him harshly for having a wine cellar nearly filled to the ceiling with bottles: "So much to do, and so little time"; and of my mother's frequent assurance, "Where there's a will, there's a way." And of Tartuffe's Dorine who promised, we'll use all manner of means, and all at once."

RESOURCES

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Pennsylvania 19104. 215-662-5600.
- NEASC. New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education.
Accreditation Handbook, 1983 ed. Richard J. Bradley,
Executive Director. The Sanborn House, 15 High Street,
Winchester, Massachusetts 01890. 617-729-6762.
- NASC. Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Commission on
Colleges. Accreditation Handbook, 1984 ed. "Revision of
Standard X (Scholarship and Research) and Standard XI (Graduate
Program)." January 21, 1987. James F. Benis, Executive
Secretary. 3700-B University Way, N.E., Seattle, Washington
98105. 206-543-0195.
- SACS. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. "Standards for the
College Delegate Assembly." 795 Peachtree Street, N.E., Atlanta,
Georgia 30308

ADDITIONAL ACCREDITATION ASSOCIATIONS

- COPA. Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. Richard M. Millard.
President. One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 305, Washington, D.C.
20036. 202-452-1433.
- New York State Board of Regents. Gordon Amback, Commissioner. Education
Building, The University of the State of New York. Albany, New York
12224.
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Commission on Higher
Education. Kenneth F. Grove. Executive Director. P.O. Box 18.
Boulder, Colorado. 303-497-0261.
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Accrediting Commission for
Senior Colleges and Universities. Mr. Kay Anderson. Executive
Director. Box 9990, Mills College, Oakland, California 94613.
415-632-5000.

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